BRITISH COLUMBIA | BCStats

Ian Darling
(250) 387-0684
Ian.Darling@gov.bc.ca
April 2012
Issue: 12-04

Canada/BC Labour Market Agreement: 2010/2011 Employment Outcomes Three Months After Program Completion

About the Labour Market Agreement (LMA) program

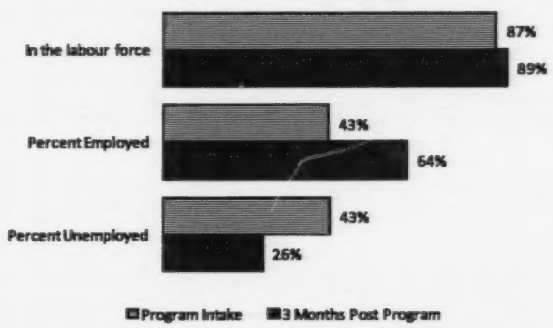
The LMA program, which is administered by the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation (JTI) provides six years of federal funding (approximately $66 million per year) for provincial labour market programs and services to help increase labour market opportunities. The programs and services are aimed at those who are unemployed but not eligible for Employment Insurance benefits or programs, and those who are employed and low-skilled, that is lacking a high school diploma, lacking a recognized certification, or who are lacking essential skills (such as literacy, numeracy, and document use).

A key component of the accountability framework for the LMA is performance measurement. Since August of 2009, BC Stats has been conducting follow-up surveys of program participants 3 and 12 months following completion of their program on behalf of JTI. To date approximately 18,500 participants have been contacted to participate in the 3-month follow up survey and of those 8,500 have completed the survey. This article looks at the employment outcomes of the 8,630 participants who finished their program during the 2010/2011 fiscal year (April 2010 to March 2011). The surveys were conducted in seven cycles between June 2010 and July 2011, with an overall response rate of 45% (3,878 participants). *Unless otherwise noted, only valid responses to program intake form and survey questions are included and those selected for inclusion provided a valid response to the employment status questions at intake and 3 months after exit (or 3,504 participants).*

Employment Status at Intake and Three Months Post Program

Upon intake to their LMA program, most of the participants surveyed were in the labour force; that is working or looking for work. However, a large proportion of participants were unemployed (43%).

Following completion of their LMA program, significantly fewer participants were unemployed



Three months after exiting a program, the percentage of participants who were unemployed had dropped considerably. More importantly, prior to their program, 4 in 10 participants were employed and 3 months after exiting the proportion employed increased to nearly two-thirds. As well, among those not in the labour force and those who were unemployed, 46% and 21%, respectively, were attending school or another program at the time of the survey.

Each Development Region posted a solid increase in the percentage of participants employed between intake and 3 months after completion of a program. While the Northeast didn't have the highest proportion of participants employed 3 months after completing a program (Nechako earned the top spot), it was the region with the largest percentage point increase (+39 percentage points). Only the percentage employed in the North Coast was appreciably below the average (45% versus 64%).

The percentage employed increased considerably within each Development Region

Development Region	Survey Respondents	% Employed	
		Program Intake	3 Months Post Program
Vancouver Island/ Coast	703	39%	81%
Mainland/ Southwest	1,598	40%	63%
Thompson/ Okanagan	442	56%	86%
Kootenay	213	45%	67%
Cariboo	214	54%	82%
North Coast	89	31%	45%
Nechako	158	57%	73%
Northeast	82	27%	66%
Total	3,504	43%	84%

Transitions between Employment Statuses

From employment to...

Among those who were employed at intake, 85% continued to be employed, while 10% were unemployed. Over 8 in 10 (82%) of those who continued to be employed were working at the same job they had before or while attending their program. While one might wonder why they continued in the same job, 54% were earning more per hour after their program, including one-quarter who were earning at least 10% more. Those who chose to find a different job faired better though, with 62% having higher wages, including 51% with hourly earnings increased by 10% or more. Over half (55%) of those who found a new job also had an increase in the number of hours worked at all of their jobs (if they had more than one), compared to 29% who remained in their prior employment.

From unemployment to...

For those who were unemployed at intake, over half (52%) were gainfully employed 3 months after exiting their program. The transition from unemployment to employment varied by Development Region, with Nechako and Northeast participants most often being employed, while those in the Kootenay and Mainland/Southwest regions were less likely to have found employment.

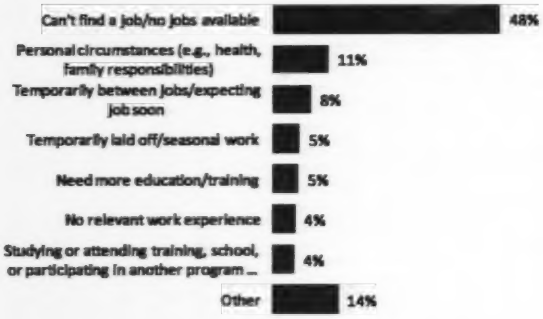
The percentage employed 3 months after exit was highest in the north for those who were previously unemployed

Development Region	% Employed
Vancouver Island/ Coast	50%
Mainland/ Southwest	53%
Thompson/ Okanagan	48%
Kootenay	56%
Cariboo	50%
North Coast	40%
Nechako	63%
Northeast	61%
Total	52%

Compared to their previous job, 48% of participants who were unemployed moved into a job where the hourly wage was higher, while the hourly earnings were lower for 36%.

The 38% who remained unemployed 3 months after exiting their program most often said the main reason was that they couldn't find a job or no jobs were available.

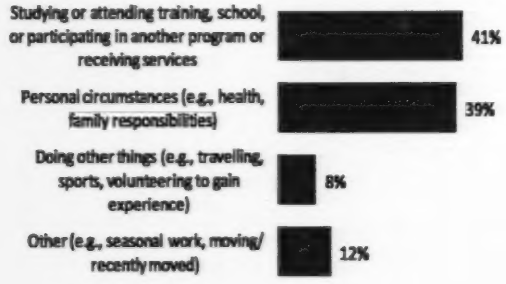
Nearly half of participants unemployed before and after their program said they couldn't find a job or there weren't any available



From not participating in the labour force to...

Over 3 in 10 (31%) participants who were not in the labour force prior to their participation in the program were employed 3 months after exiting their program, with an additional 37% actively looking for work. The remaining 32% who were not in the labour force most often cited attending school or participating in another program or service as the main reason.

Most participants who were not in the labour force before and after their program were attending school or participating in another program


Studying or attending training, school, or participating in another program or receiving services
41%
Personal circumstances (e.g., health, family responsibilities)
39%
Doing other things (e.g., travelling, sports, volunteering to gain experience)
8%
Other (e.g., seasonal work, moving/ recently moved)
12%

Participant Characteristics and Employment Outcomes after Three Months

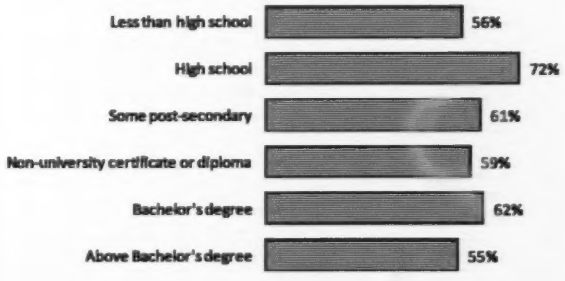
A few of the demographic characteristics available will be examined in this section to determine if there are particular groups that have had greater success.

Educational Attainment

The highest level of education for the majority of participants in LMA programs was less than high school (19%) or high school (35%). Those with some post-secondary (17%) or a certificate or diploma (13%) make up the next largest category, while those with a bachelor's degree (12%) or higher (4%) are in the minority.

Interestingly, those with less than a high school education and those with degree above a bachelor's have similar employment outcomes and the group with the highest employment is those with a high school education. This could be an indication that it takes longer for participants with higher levels of education to find employment. The results of the 12 month outcomes survey may provide some insight into this peculiarity.

Those with a high school education were most often employed 3 months after their LMA program



Gender

Slightly over half (53%) of participants surveyed were men. After exiting their LMA program, nearly 7 in 10 men were employed, whereas the proportion of women employed was 7 percentage points lower (60%).

The proportion of men employed 3 months after exiting their program was higher compared to women.

Age

Approximately one-third (34%) of participants surveyed were under 30 years of age, about half were aged 30 to 54 and 11% were 55 years of age and over.

Participants between the ages of 30 and 54 met with the most success in attaining employment by 3 months after exiting their program, followed closely by those less than 30 years of age.

The employment outcomes of youth and those aged 30 to 54 were greater than those of older workers

For more information about the Canada/BC Labour Market Agreement and yearly outcomes reports, please visit: http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/labourmarketagreement

Please note that the participants selected for inclusion in this article represent a subset of the LMA participants included in the Canada/British Columbia LMA/STTF 2010/11 Performance Outcome Report. Participants selected provided a valid response to the employment status questions at intake and 3 months after exit (3,504 of 3,878 survey participants). Only valid responses to program intake form and survey questions are included in the analysis.